

the very day after its delivery Peel himself submitted

|
to his Cabinet the draft of the address to his constituents

[
which has become famous in history as the Tamworth Manifesto, and there is a very remarkable coincidence, for it can hardly have been more, between, the policy of moderate reform therein unfolded and the practical measures upon which Disraeli had insisted in his speech. The Tamworth Manifesto was too opportunist in its spirit, too much of a programme and too little of a creed, long to satisfy Disraeli; but at all events it showed that Toryism had ceased to spell reaction or — a thing even more repugnant to one of his temperament — stagnation, and was in process of adapting itself to the spirit of the age. The greatest obstacle in the way of his entering the Tory camp had now been removed, and not many weeks after the Wycombe election he was nominated¹ at his own request as a candidate for the Carlton Club, which had been founded a few years before by the Duke of Wellington and his friends, and had at once become the recognised social citadel of Toryism. The decisive step had now been taken. He had been exactly three years in politics, and his apparent course in those years had been that of a political comet, highly eccentric, and irregular. Henceforward his place in the political firmament is fixed, or his orbit at all events conforms to the accepted laws of political motion.

It is no accident that there is a certain ambiguity about the party affiliations of nearly all our greater statesmen: Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Canning, Peel, Palmerston, Disraeli, and Gladstone — none of these has an absolutely consistent party record; and, indeed, a man with such a record would be more likely to win distinction as a good partisan than as a great statesman. If we are to measure consistency by ideas, Disraeli is the most consistent of them all, and yet more than any of the others he was to suffer throughout his career from the reputation of political time-server and adventurer acquired in ¹ Lord Strangford proposer and Lord Chandos seconder.